

## **Disproportionality**

**Disproportionate representation is defined as “the extent to which membership in a given group affects the probability of being placed in a specific education category (Oswald, et al. 1999)**

**The disproportionate placement of students of a given ethnic group in special education programs, means that the percentage of students from that group in such programs is disproportionately greater than their percentage in the school population as a whole (NCCRESt, 2003).**

**Overrepresentation: Condition in which a racial/ethnic group is represented by a higher percentage in the special education population than in the overall population.**

*How does it impact state departments of education and local school divisions?*

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is required to collect and examine data to assess whether any racial/ethnic groups are disproportionately represented in special education disability and educational environment categories. VDOE must collect and analyze data relating to both the overrepresentation and underrepresentation in identification of all racial/ethnic groups. VDOE also is required to develop a process to determine if disproportionate representation is the result of inappropriate identification. VDOE must report disproportionate representation data for State Performance Plan Indicators 9 & 10: Indicator 9 – all races/ethnicities of children ages 6-22 receiving special education, the percent of school divisions that report disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification; Indicator 10 – specific disability categories, at a minimum, six disability categories (Intellectual Disability, Emotional Disability, Autism, Other Health Impaired, Specific Learning Disability, and Speech/Language Impairments), the percent of school divisions with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification.

VDOE provides technical assistance to local school divisions in addressing overrepresentation in several ways:

- Provision and analysis of data regarding children identified for special education disaggregated by race and disability
- Provision of critical questions and checklists for examination of data, policies, practices and procedures.

**Disproportionate Representation that is the Result of Inappropriate Identification: Overrepresentation that results from a violation of policy or procedure in the special education identification process.**

Disproportionate representation that is the result of inappropriate identification is determined through a two-step process including an analysis of data and a review of individual student records to determine compliance with identification policies and procedures.